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Identify the Stages in Reducing the Anxiety of EFL Secondary Students' in Grouped-Peer Feedback Activities in Speaking Classes

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Abstrak

Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris telah menjadi tantangan yang dirasakan oleh murid EFL dan guru untuk dapat mencapai tujuan pembelajaran. Salah satu tantangan yang dirasakan oleh murid EFL dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris adalah dalam melakukan praktek berbicara, yang tentunya hal tersebut cukup memberikan kesulitan kepada murid. Kesulitan tersebut dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor, salah satunya adalah faktor kecemasan dalam kelas berbicara. Dalam penelitian ini peer feedback hadir sebagai treatment yang dapat membantu mengurangi kecemasan pada siswa di kelas berbicara. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi di tahap mana peer feedback dapat membantu mengurangi kecemasan siswa di kelas berbicara, serta mencari tahu manfaat dari peer feedback berkelompok di kelas berbicara. Penelitian dilakukan di SMP Negeri 3 Klari dengan cara melakukan observasi dan wawancara yang ditujukan kepada murid kelas 8F untuk memperoleh data-data penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada tahap diskusi dan presentasi yang dilakukan di inti kegiatan peer feedback dapat membantu mengurangi kecemasan pada siswa di kelas berbicara. Selain itu, penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peer feedback bermanfaat baik bagi pemberi maupun penerima. Kemudian kegiatan peer feedback telah memberikan motivasi pada siswa untuk lebih banyak berlatih baik dalam menggunakan Bahasa Inggris dalam kelas berbicara. Dengan demikian, peer feedback terbukti tidak hanya dapat mengurangi kecemasan pada siswa di kelas berbicara, juga dapat memberikan motivasi kepada murid di kelas 8F SMP Negeri 3 Klari.

Kata Kunci: *Peer Feedback, Kecemasan, Peer feedback berkelompok, Murid EFL, Kelas berbicara*

Abstract

Learning English has become a challenge felt by EFL students and teachers to achieve learning objectives. One of the challenges that EFL students experience in English classes is practicing speaking, which gives students quite a hard time. Several factors, including anxiety in the speaking course, influence these difficulties. This study presented peer feedback as a treatment that could help reduce students' stress in speaking class. This study aims to identify at which stage peer feedback can help reduce students' anxiety in speaking class and find out the benefits of grouped-peer feedback in speaking classes. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Klari with observations and interviews aimed at grade 8F students to obtain research data. The study results show that the discussion and presentation stages at the core of peer feedback activities can help reduce anxiety in students in speaking classes. In addition, research shows that peer feedback benefits both the giver and the recipient. Then peer feedback activities have motivated students to practice using English in speaking class better. Thus, peer feedback has been proven to reduce anxiety in speaking class and encourage students in class 8F of SMP Negeri 3 Klari.

Keywords: Peer feedback, anxiety, grouped-peer feedback, EFL students, speaking classes

INTRODUCTION

English in Indonesia has a role as a foreign language where the application of learning in schools can be a challenge that is felt by both EFL teachers and students, especially in speaking skills. Realizing that teachers significantly contribute to EFL students' success in speaking classes, teachers must play an active and creative role in achieving learning goals. Suban (2021) states that the limited scope for practice is one of the difficulties experienced by EFL students in developing their ability to speak English. In addition, the anxiety factor that EFL students feel in foreign language classes can also be a learning challenge. Macintyre and Gardner (1991) said most EFL students experience anxiety in speaking classes. Anxiety occurs because of the pressure felt by someone. In speaking practice, anxiety can be influenced by several factors, including linguistic and non-linguistic factors (Marlia, 2018). Then the factors that affect anxiety will cause different symptoms, such as those affecting students' bodies, minds, and behavior. Therefore, identifying the factors that become problems and difficulties students encounter can be the teacher's first step in determining the right strategies, techniques, and learning methods to help provide practical learning activities.

One effort the teacher can make to help the learning process is to use peer feedback techniques. Since there are many benefits to be gained from giving feedback, peer feedback itself is the feedback obtained and intended by peers to provide feedback and suggestions based on performance results. Lately, the phenomenon of peer feedback is also often used in learning activities. The application can be done individually, in pairs, and groups. Supported by group peer feedback can help reduce speech anxiety and improve speaking

skills (Marlia, 2018). Therefore, applying peer feedback can also help correct their mistakes and train students to be responsible (Chien et al., 2020). Not only that, Motallebzadeh et al. (2020) stated that using peer feedback in speaking classes is very useful and can help reduce anxiety in students. Thus, Peer feedback can be the right choice for teachers to use in learning activities in speaking styles in individuals, pairs, and groups.

The success of implementing peer feedback in learning activities can be followed by several procedures, where the teacher must be able to promote and motivate students to use it (Kusumayanthi, 2022). In addition, Jiang in Mualifah (2021) shows several stages teachers can take before conducting peer feedback activities: pre-peer feedback, while-peer feedback, and post-peer feedback. In the pre-peer feedback stage, the teacher provides explanations and directions to students, which is done before starting the main activity. Then, in the while-peer feedback, students provide feedback on ideas, comments, and suggestions to their peers based on performance results. And post-peer feedback is the last stage, where the giver and recipient of feedback review and check again based on the feedback results and followed by teacher evaluation as the previous activity of giving peer feedback. In addition, it is important to review that the feedback provided must be fair, easily identifiable, and helpful (Turner, 2003). Thus, peer feedback can recommend activities and strategies to help the learning process. Thus, it is crucial for teachers always to guide students during peer feedback activities to achieve peer feedback success and achieve learning goals.

Although peer feedback has been widely discussed, several studies have examined peer feedback in different contexts and methods. Previous studies have rarely identified the extent to which peer feedback can help reduce anxiety in EFL students in speaking classes. The present study aims to identify at what stage peer feedback can be helpful and reduce stress in EFL students in speaking practice. Additionally, to find out grouped-peer feedback benefits in speaking classes. The application of peer feedback is carried out in groups, including observations and interviews with EFL students at SMP Negeri 3 Klari in Karawang district to find out the benefits and at which stage peer feedback can help reduce students' anxiety in speaking class.

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach in writing this article uses a qualitative descriptive method. In this study, researchers conducted observations and interviews to collect data. Research and observation activities were conducted from 24 to 25 May 2023 at SMP Negeri 3 Klari, Karawang Regency. The participants in this study were four of 39 students of class 8F at SMP Negeri 3 Klari. The participants are selected based on nonprobability with purposive

sampling type. Peer feedback will be carried out in groups, with each group providing feedback in the form of comments, ideas, and suggestions based on the results of the speaking performance of other group members. The group that provides feedback will discuss and present the results by speaking in front of the class. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structural face-to-face.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After the data collected from the observations and interviews conducted with class 8F students of SMP Negeri 3 Klari, peer feedback was applied by following the stages of pre-peer feedback, while-peer feedback, and post-peer feedback (Jiang in Mualifah, 2021) . This stage supports the successful use of peer feedback in speaking classes. Based on the observation results, the first-time students in class 8F of SMP Negeri 3 Klari had done peer feedback; in other words, peer feedback activities became a new experience for students. In addition, it is shown by the ability of the English language, which still needs to improve in pronunciation and vocabulary. The lack of students' ability to speak English was revealed when the practice of speaking English in front of the class took place. In practicing speaking English, students showed anxiety, such as handshaking, heart beating, and nervousness. The anxiety symptoms were supported by the interview statement that states the symptoms of student anxiety when Pratik speaks as follows:

"Pas aku tampil, aku ngerasa grogi sama gemeteran gitu tangannya. Soalnya aku ngerasa gak pede."

(C.P.A, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

"Aku sih ngerasanya grogi degdegan juga. Aku takut salah gitu pas tampil tuh. Aku takut salah pengucapannya."

(M.T.A, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

Based on the student statements above, students show different anxiety symptoms, followed by factors that influence student anxiety when in speaking class. Stress experienced by students can undoubtedly affect the performance of students speaking, which is shown based on the results of observations with deficiencies in speaking practice. The shortcoming students often do is the need for pronunciation, intonation, and gestures.

Therefore, peer feedback is a treatment that can help students' anxiety in speaking class. Peer feedback is done by grouping and selecting one of the group members to be the leader who will present the results of the discussion giving feedback. Based on the

observations, many students still need direction in each session; therefore, the teacher's role becomes more active in guiding students during the peer feedback process. The application of peer feedback that has been carried out is considered to be of benefit to students, supported by the results of the following student interview statements:

"Bermanfaat banget. Aku jadi bisa diskusi sama temen juga, jadi lebih deket juga sama temen temen. Terus aku bisa ngasih pendapat juga."

(D.P, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

"Aku ngerasa kebantu banget sih, soalnya kita jadi lebih bisa kerja sama sama bisa saling ngasih masukan ... iya berbagi pendapat gitu. Seru soalnya, aku kan berkelompok gitu jadi gak ngebosenin. Terus tuh senengnya selain bisa ngasih saran, kita juga bisa dapet saran dari penampilan kita tuh. Jadi aku tau apa yang harus aku perbaiki."

(C.P.A, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

"Seru!! Soalnya kayak jarang gitu ada tugas kelompok yang kitanya juga bisa saling ngasih masukan buat temen lainnya."

(D.H, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

Based on the statement above, showing peer feedback can benefit both the recipient and the giver. In addition, group peer feedback activities have made learning activities more enjoyable. Discussion activities carried out in groups train students to solve problems and improve students' social skills.

Group peer feedback activities are indeed a new and exciting experience for students. In addition to being an interesting activity, researchers have found the benefits and at what stage peer feedback can reduce anxiety in students in speaking classes. Which is indicated by the following interview result statement:

"Menurut aku ada di bagain diskusi. Soalnya kita bisa nyelesein masalah barengan, maksudnya kalo bareng bareng tuh lebih tenang daripada sendiri ... kalo aku harus nyelesein masalah sendiri aku takutnya gabisa ngasih yang terbaik gitu, takut kaya saran yang"

aku kasih tuh salah. Terus kan kalo diskusi berkelompok tuh kita juga bisa saling tau saran masing-masing”

(D.P, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

”Di sesi diskusinya sih, soalnya kan sebelumnya kita dikasih komentar sama mereka, terus gantian kita juga bisa ngasih komentar ke mereka. Mmm.. kaya gini loh miss, kita kan kalo maju ke depan pasti masih ada yang kurang, dan ngerasa lega aja kalo ngasih feedback ke temen soalnya yang kurang pas praktik tuh bukan kita aja. Jadi saling ngasih saran dan memperbaiki gitu,”

(M.T.A, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

The student statements above show that students feel they can be helped to reduce anxiety in a class by speaking at the discussion stage. At this stage, students think that group discussion activities can provide relief for solving problems with group members; students also gain confidence when in group discussion activities. Not only that, students get a sense of relief because these students can advise students who experience the same thing as when practicing speaking; in other words, anxiety is reduced by making comparisons with other students who experience similar things.

”Aku sih ngerasanya di bagian presentasi ya ... aku ngerasa kaya pas aku ngasih masukan ke temen ngerasa kaya aku tuh harus ngelawan rasa takut biar aku berani ngomong ... karna ngebantu banget gitu miss buat mencahin masalahnya. Terus kita juga jadi bisa memperbaiki yang kurang gitu. Terus aku ngerasa kaya tenang aja gitu pas aku tau aku ada yang kurang di bagian ini. Soalnya aku kadang ngerasa pas tampil tuh aku udah bener, udah ga ada yang salah. Tapi ternyata masih ada yang salah sama kurang menurut temen temen aku. Jadi aku ngerasa kebanantu banget gitu sama masukan (feedback) dari temen temen, aku jadi tau di bagian mana yang salah nya, jadi bisa aku benerin nantinya.”

(C.P.A, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

Apart from the discussion stage, the statement above shows that the stage of presenting the results of the discussion can reduce anxiety for students. Reducing anxiety

happened because the student felt challenged to overcome his fear and anxiety and speak well when presenting the discussion results.

Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that students have different stages in group peer feedback activities to reduce anxiety in speaking class. Besides reducing anxiety, peer feedback can also help students practice more in speaking class, as shown by the results of previous observations, which show that many students still do not master speaking skills. There were still many areas for improvement in pronunciation and vocabulary. With peer feedback, students can practice developing English language skills, especially pronunciation and vocabulary. The following statement supports this:

"Aku ngerasanya kaya aku tuh punya tanggung jawab lebih besar gitu dibanding anggota lainnya, soalnya aku kan ketua grup juga jadi aku harus bisa lebih aktif sama ngarahin kelompok aku juga. ... Aku ngerasa kebantu banget (peer feedback activity) soalnya aku bisa sekalian belajar juga buat ngasih saran ke yang lain, apalagi kan harus pake Bahasa Inggris juga ya ngejelasinnya. ... Susah, soalnya aku gak terlalu bisa Bahasa Inggris, jadi pas dibantu sama Miss bisa sekalian belajar juga gitu kan, jadi tau juga kosa kata baru yang aku gak tau."

(C.P.A, interviewed on May 25th, 2023)

The statement above shows that besides having responsibilities in peer feedback activities in groups, students also feel that their ability to speak English still needs to improve and feel helped by the assistance given to learn new vocabulary and pronounce English correctly. In this way, students will gain new knowledge in English, and can lead students to practice more, especially in speaking English.

Based on the result of the research, it can be said that grade 8F students at SMP Negeri 3 Klari have symptoms of anxiety that are influenced by two different factors, namely linguistic factors and non-linguistic factors. Deficiencies in pronunciation and vocabulary mark linguistic factors. Meanwhile, non-linguistic factors affect anxiety, such as lack of confidence and fear (Marlia, 2018), followed by different anxiety symptoms.

Implementing peer feedback in the speaking class is a new experience for EFL grade 8F students at SMP Negeri 3 Klari; this is supported by a sense of interest and feeling that this activity is interesting. The experience of students using peer feedback in groups is also indicated by a positive response that considers peer feedback a helpful and useful activity. In group activities, students can build a sense of responsibility, think critically, build social

relationships, and problem-solve. Following what Chien et al. (2020) suggested, it can train students' responsibilities apart from providing peer feedback corrections. Therefore, group activities are not only helpful in developing students' learning abilities but also in building students' communication skills.

Peer feedback has shown that peer feedback activities can reduce student anxiety. The anxiety reducer is supported by the stage chosen by EFL grade 8F students at SMP Negeri 3 Klari, who stated that the discussion and presentation stages in group activities and giving peer feedback could help reduce anxiety. At the discussion stage in group activities, students get a sense of relief because of joint problem-solving activities; besides that, discussion activities can increase student confidence and encourage students to provide suggestions based on their peers' speaking performance results. In giving suggestions, students also feel relieved by comparing their performance results and the appearance of peers who experience similar things. This can reduce anxiety and increase students' ability to think critically and be responsible in group activities. Not only that, but the presentation stage carried out by the group leader to present the results of the discussion can also reduce anxiety for students. The anxiety reducer happened because the student was challenged and motivated to fight the fear of public speaking and perform best.

Not only can it reduce anxiety, but in group peer feedback activities, students can also do more practice because there are still many students who need to improve in mastering English, especially in speaking practice which is characterized by deficiencies in pronunciation and vocabulary mastery. Therefore, the teacher and group mates have a role in helping each other and providing advice to help students improve their English language skills in speaking classes. The input given by the teacher and peers will help and motivate students to be able to do more practice.

CONCLUSION

English-speaking practice activities are always challenging, especially for students who do not master English, and have factors that affect students' anxiety. Therefore, peer feedback activities can be a solution that can help the learning process and reduce anxiety in students in speaking classes. Research conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Klari shows that, in group peer feedback activities, there are stages that can reduce student anxiety, namely the discussion and presentation stages; besides that, group peer feedback activities can motivate students to do more practice. Grouped-peer feedback activities are beneficial to be interesting activities and can improve the quality of student knowledge and learning. Therefore, the teacher has an essential role in making successful peer feedback activities as a giver of direction and assistance to students.

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